

# *News Release*

For Immediate Release

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## **MDAC WORKING ON NATION-WIDE MEAT RECALL; NO REPORTS OF ANY PROBLEMS IN MS**

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The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) today began supervising the disposal of ground beef and sausage produced by a Florida company and sent to schools across the United States. USDA issued a hold order August 14 forbidding distribution and use of ground beef and ground pork products produced by the Bauer Meat Company of Ocala, Florida. The hold order was issued because of an ongoing investigation that has raised concerns about food safety and product quality. On Friday, September 11 a recall was announced and MDAC immediately began contacting schools across the state.

“Our Meat Inspection Division is dealing with this situation quickly and comprehensively,” said Mississippi Agriculture Commissioner Lester Spell, Jr. “Any type of food recall is serious especially when it involves products shipped to our children.”

The recall affects 3.5 million pounds of ground meat and ground pork shipped nationwide. Approximately 60,000 pounds in Mississippi are on hold and awaiting destruction. The Meat Inspection Division of MDAC has identified 152 public and private schools affected by the recall. All affected schools have been notified to continue to hold the product for destruction under official supervision. State officials say there have been no reports of any problems related to the recalled products. Inspectors from both the Meat Inspection and Consumer Protection Divisions of MDAC will supervise the food disposal and officials hope to have the process completed within a week.

Commissioner Spell credits reorganization within the department with making the quick response time possible. “Under the old system, we only had one compliance inspector,” said Spell. “We would have had to pull personnel from other divisions to handle a situation like this and some of those inspectors might not have had the best training for the situation. Now, thanks to cross training and streamlining within the department, we are able to get trained personnel out in the field and deal with this in a timely manner.”